

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE (UCC)

The Gujarat government recently moved a proposal to constitute a committee to evaluate all aspects of implementing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).



About:

- A Uniform Civil Code is one that would provide for one law for the entire country, applicable to all religious communities in their personal matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption etc.
- **Article 44 of the Constitution** lays down that the state shall endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code for the citizens throughout the territory of India.

Directive Principles of State Policy:

- Article 44 is one of the Directive Principles of State Policy.
- These, as defined in Article 37, are not justiciable (not enforceable by any court) but the principles laid down therein are fundamental in governance.
- While Article 44 uses the words “state shall endeavour”, other Articles in the ‘Directive Principles’ chapter use words such as “in particular strive”; “shall in particular direct its policy”; “shall be obligation of the state” etc.

Uniform Civil Code (Goa):

- Goa, a former Portuguese colony, was incorporated into the Union of India in 1961. In 1987, Goa was made a separate state.
- The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) was introduced in Goa in the year 1870 by the erstwhile Portuguese rulers.
- It was retained even after the territory was merged with India in the year 1961.

KALANAMAK RICE

Indian Agriculture Research Institute has successfully tested two new dwarf varieties in Uttar Pradesh that give double the yield of traditional variety of Kalanamak rice.



About:

- Kalanamak is a traditional variety of paddy with black husk and strong fragrance.
- It is considered a gift from Lord Buddha to the people of Sravasti when he visited the region after enlightenment.

- Grown in 11 districts of the Terai region of north-eastern Uttar Pradesh and in Nepal, the traditional variety has been prone to ‘lodging’, a reason for its low yield.
- Its yield is barely two to 2.5 tonnes per hectare.

○ **Lodging:**

- Lodging is a condition in which the top of the plant becomes heavy because of grain formation, the stem becomes weak, and the plant falls on the ground.

Geographical Indication (GI) tag:

- The traditional Kalanamak rice is **protected under the Geographical Indication (GI) tag system.**
- It’s recorded in the GI application that Lord Budhha gifted Kalanamak paddy to the people of Sravasti so that they remembered him by its fragrance.

New varieties:

- Addressing the problem, the Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI) has successfully developed two dwarf varieties of Kalanamak rice.
- They have been named
 - **Pusa Narendra Kalanamak 1638 and**
 - **Pusa Narendra Kalanamak 1652.**
- The IARI says the new name is in recognition of its association with the Acharya Narendra Dev University of Agriculture and Technology in Ayodhya, for testing the two varieties.

- The yield of the new varieties is double that of the traditional variety. The IARI and the Uttar Pradesh Council of Agriculture are working together to make the seeds available to farmers at the earliest.
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RED MUD

CSIR- Advanced Materials and Processes Research Institute (AMPRI) has recently converted red mud into X-ray shielding tiles.

About:

- It has converted red mud into X-ray shielding tiles in a green and economically viable manner through a ceramic route by adding a certain weight percentage of high Z material and binder with it.
- These tiles can be used to build radiation shielding structures in diagnostic X-rays, CT scanner rooms, Cath labs, bone mineral density, dental X-rays, etc., instead of the toxic lead sheet to protect the public from radiation hazards.

Red Mud:

- Red Mud is the waste generated in the Bayer process of alumina production from bauxite.
- It is also known as bauxite residue.
- Red Mud is defined as a “High Volume Low Effect Waste”.
- Nearly 1 to 1.5 tonnes of RM is being generated while producing one tonne of alumina from the bauxite ore through the Bayer process.
- It is considered to be toxic due to its extreme alkalinity and heavy element leaching.
- Annually about 175 million tonnes of red mud have been generated globally and stored in a specially designed clay-lined pond.
- Among that India is producing nearly 9 million tonnes of red mud every year.
- The clay-lined ponds often broke out and pollute soil, groundwater, and air and become fatal for both humans and wildlife.

- Red mud is one of the underutilized industrial wastes and getting accumulated over the years due to an increase in alumina production as well as inadequate technologies for its large-scale utilization.
- The red mud contains 30 – 55% of Fe_2O_3 , which is suitable for attenuating high-energy ionizing radiations like X- and gamma rays.

[INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE BY ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA \(ECI\)](#)

The Election Commission of India is hosting a two day international conference at New Delhi. The ECI leads the Cohort on Election Integrity – which was established as a follow on to the ‘Summit for Democracy’ held in December, 2021.



About:

- Theme is ‘Role, Framework & Capacity of Election Management Bodies’.
- It will have discussions on the current & future challenges being faced by the Election Management Bodies’ with respect to their

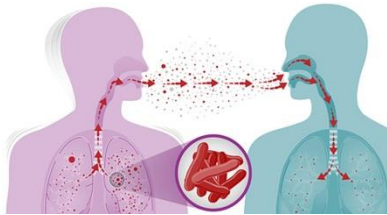
role and framework to ensure ‘election integrity’.

‘Summit for Democracy’:

- It was an initiative of **US President and hosted in December 2021.**
- Following this Summit, a "Year of Action" was proposed with events and dialogues on themes related to Democracy and to host an in-person ‘Leaders’ Summit for Democracy’ subsequently.
- The Summit also developed two platforms - ‘Focal Groups’ and ‘Democracy Cohorts’ to facilitate participation in the Year of Action.
- As part of the ‘Summit for Democracy’ Year of Action, India through the ECI, is leading the ‘Democracy Cohort on Election Integrity’ to share its knowledge, technical expertise and experiences with other democracies of the world.
- ECI, as its lead, has proposed to also provide training and capacity building programmes to Election Management Bodies (EMBs) across the world and provide technical consultancy as per needs of other EMBs.

TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

Around 10.6 million people across the world were diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) in 2021, an increase of 4.5% from 2020, while 1.6 million patients died of the bacterial disease, according to the World Health Organization's 2022 Global TB report.



About:

- With 28% cases, India was among the eight countries accounting for more than two-third (or 68.3%) of the total TB patients' count.
- The other countries were Indonesia (9.2% cases), China (7.4%), the Philippines (7%), Pakistan (5.8%), Nigeria (4.4%), Bangladesh (3.6%) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2.9%).
- The burden of drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) also increased by 3% globally between 2020 and 2021.
- India was among the three countries — others being Indonesia and the Philippines — that accounted for most of the reduction in 2020 (67% of the global total).
- They made partial recoveries in 2021, but still accounted for 60% of the global reduction compared with 2019, according to the report.

Tuberculosis (TB):

- Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by **bacteria (Mycobacterium tuberculosis)** that most often affect the lungs.
- It is curable and preventable disease.
- **Two kinds of tuberculosis infection:**
 - **Latent TB**- The bacteria remain in the body in an inactive state. They cause no symptoms and are not contagious, but they can become active.
 - **Active TB** - The bacteria do cause symptoms and can be transmitted to others.
 - About one-quarter of the world's population has latent TB.
 - People infected with TB bacteria have a 5–15% lifetime risk of falling ill with TB.

- However, persons with compromised immune systems, such as people living with HIV, malnutrition or diabetes, or people who use tobacco, have a much higher risk of falling ill.

- **Transmission:**

- TB is spread from person to person through the air.
- When people with lung TB cough, sneeze or spit, they propel the TB germs into the air.
- Even after inhaling a few drops of these germ, a person can get infected.

Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB)

- Drug resistance emerges when anti-TB medicines are used inappropriately, through incorrect prescription by health care providers, poor quality drugs, and patients stopping treatment prematurely.
- Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) is a form of TB caused by bacteria that do not respond to first-line anti-TB drugs.
- MDR-TB is treatable and curable by using second-line drugs.

JANGI THOPAN POWARI HYDROELECTRICITY PROJECT (JTP HEP)

“No Means No” campaign launched by a group of youngsters against setting up of new hydel projects in Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh asking candidates of various political parties contesting in the upcoming Assembly election to give an affidavit, citing their proposed steps to deal with stopping construction of new hydel projects in Kinnaur.



About:

- It is a proposed **804 megawatt project over the Satluj River.**
- The **run-of-the-river (ROR) project** envisages construction of a concrete gravity dam of ±88 metre high above the deepest foundation level across river Satluj near Jangi village, and underground powerhouse on the right bank upstream of Tehsil boundary (Kashang Nallah).
- The diversion of water will involve construction of a 12-km-long tunnel.

- Construction of the dam will result in the submergence of about 156.2917 ha of land, out of which 143.2093 ha is forest land and 13.0824 ha is private.
- The length of the reservoir will be 10.6 km.

Impact:

- Kinnaur district is mainly marked by its cold desert, tribal population, fragile topography, rich and diverse culture, apple orchards, off-season vegetables and the Satluj River.
- The river has been dammed at multiple places along the valley to create an additional feature to Kinnaur's identity as Himachal's hydropower hub, which locals believe is a malediction.
- An integral part of the old Hindustan-Tibetan Route, **Jangram Valley, lies on the right bank of the Satluj river in the district.**
- **Chilgoza pine:**
 - Another major impact is connected to the **forest of Chilgoza pine**, which has a patchy distribution across arid mountain valleys in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.
 - **Kinnaur has the largest Chilgoza forests**, covering an area of around 2,000 hectares.
 - Chilgoza pine is well-known for its edible seeds and is rich in carbohydrates, proteins, and other medicinal values.
 - **It is classified as an endangered and rare tree species.**
 - Jangi, one of the affected Gram Panchayat from this JTP HEP, has one of the largest patches of chilgoza in the country, according to Himachal Pradesh's State of Environment report.

Run-of-river hydro projects:

- ROR projects are seen as a "green" alternative to high-dam hydropower projects such as the Tehri Hydropower Project.
- This is because an ROR dam diverts the river flow in a controlled environment to generate electricity and sends the water back to the river, whereas a high-dam project stores river water in a reservoir.

[RUSSIA HALTS UKRAINE BLACK SEA GRAIN EXPORTS, CITING ATTACK ON CRIMEA](#)

In News:

- Russia has suspended participation in a U.N.-brokered **Black Sea grain deal** after (what it said was) a major Ukrainian drone attack on its fleet in Crimea.
- Russia's defence ministry said Ukraine attacked the Black Sea Fleet near Sevastopol on the annexed Crimean Peninsula with 16 drones.
- It claimed that the ships targeted were involved in ensuring the grain corridor out of Ukraine's Black Sea ports.
- So far, the deal had seen more than 9 million tonnes of grain exported from Ukraine and brought down global food prices.

Black Sea



- The Black Sea lies between the continents of Asia and Europe.
- It is bound to the west by the Balkan Peninsula, to the east by the Caucasus, north by East European Plains, and south by Anatolia of Western Asia.
- It is bordered by Ukraine to the north, Russia to the northeast, Georgia to the east, Turkey to the south, and Bulgaria and Romania to the west.
- The black Sea drainage basin drains several countries, including the six countries that share its coast.

Black Sea grain deal between Russia and Ukraine

- In July 2022, Russia and Ukraine signed a deal to reopen grains exports from Ukrainian Black Sea ports.
- The agreement is also known as the Black Sea Initiative.



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- The deal will enable Ukraine to export 22 million tons of grain and other agricultural products that have been stuck in Black Sea ports due to the war.
- It would also allow Russia to export its grain and fertilizers.

Key highlights of the deal

- The agreement would open a path for significant volumes of commercial food exports from three key Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea: Odessa, Chernomorsk and Yuzhny.
- The deal makes provisions for the safe passage of ships.
- A control centre will be established in Istanbul, staffed by U.N., Turkish, Russian and Ukrainian officials, to run and coordinate the process.
- Ships would undergo inspections to ensure they are not carrying weapons.

Significance of this deal:

- It brought relief for developing countries on the edge of bankruptcy and the most vulnerable people on the edge of famine.
- It helps stabilize global food prices which were already at record levels even before the war.
- Ukraine is one of the world's largest exporters of wheat, corn and sunflower oil, but Russia's invasion of the country and naval blockade of its ports have halted shipments.
- Some grain is being transported through Europe by rail, road and river, but the prices of vital commodities like wheat and barley have soared.

